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BOARDING SCHOOLS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED.

BY- CLATWORTHY, F. JAMES

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SUGGESTED IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY BOARDING SCHOOLS FOR URBAN DISADVANTAGED AND DISTURBED OR DELINQUENT CHILDREN. THE INSTITUTIONAL FAMILY LIFE OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS CAN OFFER THESE CHILDREN AN ESCAPE FROM THE DESTRUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT OF THE URBAN GHETTO. MOREOVER, URBAN SCHOOLS SHOULD INSTITUTE SUMMER PROGRAMS OUT OF THE CITY WHERE LEARNING COULD TAKE PLACE IN A RECREATIONAL SETTING. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CROWN WOODS COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, A STATE-SUPPORTED LONDON SCHOOL, IS DISCUSSED TO ILLUSTRATE THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS SCHEME. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN "PHI DELTA KAPPAN," VOLUME 48, NUMBER 7, MARCH 1967. (NH)

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COVER PHOTO This scene was photographed last summer in a Head Start class at Toledo, Ohio. Our thanks to Richard Allen Huston, director of Head Start for the Toledo Board of Education, for the excellent photograph.—**The Editors**

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BOARDING SCHOOLS for the Disadvantaged

By F. JAMES CLATWORTHY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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ALTHOUGH there are many programs which attempt to deal with the disadvantaged child in an urban setting, most of them have a fundamental weakness: They are only eight-to-five programs which allow the child to return to his disadvantaged environment, minimizing the effects of any type of school enrichment.

At New York University, John C. Robertson has begun a program, Project Apex, which avoids the eight-to-five syndrome, but operates only at the college level. Project Apex is attempting to educate and train 60 male high school graduates from Harlem who were selected from the general high school curriculum. Until Project Apex, these students had no chance of going to college; yet their teachers all thought that given the opportunity they could make it. Thus far Project Apex is proving extremely successful, and Robertson plans to add approximately 120 students in the next two years.

There are two features of Project Apex which set it apart from other projects with like purposes. First and perhaps foremost, it is not an eight-to-five program. Being college level, the students are housed in well-appointed quarters, get three meals a day, and are even given 15-hour-a-week jobs to provide spending money.

Second, the program is designed ultimately to assist the disadvantaged child by training teachers who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. In effect, it is an educational "operation bootstrap" for meeting one of the major problems of urban education—the increasing ghetto population of disadvantaged children.

If the eight-to-five handicap can be successfully eliminated at the college level, as in Project Apex, why not at the elementary and secondary levels? Can we add well-staffed and well-supervised boarding facilities to our elementary and secondary schools? Careful cost studies will have to be made, of course. They will need to take into account the fact that not only the disadvantaged child would be helped; there is also the youngster who is now sent off to a juvenile home to (sometimes) become a hardened criminal because his parents just "can't get anywhere" with him. His cost to society is not easy to calculate, but it is enormous. There are other thousands of youngsters who for one reason or another should be taken out of an inadequate home environment but who now have no place to go. They are orphans in every sense except the literal.

Institutional family life has disadvantages of which we are all aware, but for children who have no real family life it offers escape. Only sentimentalists would force them to live in their present "homes."

One of the realizations which emerged from the often-criticized Moynihan Report published by the Department of Labor was that "the

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disintegration of families is both a cause and a result of some of the gravest problems of the ghetto poor: the staggering unemployment rates, the stunted I.Q.'s, the poor performance in school, the swollen crime and narcotics statistics." Unfortunately, the report only proposed a broad policy declaration committing the government to "an attack on the problem." It offered no direct programs, yet suggested that jobs remained a major part of the solution. The Job Corps is one response to this kind of thinking. But jobs are not enough. School administrators working in conjunction with social workers, welfare officials, teacher-training institutions, teachers, and anyone else who could assist will have to begin developing a far more comprehensive program to counter the growth of the urban ghetto, and the social and racial stigmas that growth supports.

Naturally, skeptics will question the value of boarding facilities at public schools and say the expense would be prohibitive.* But they need only look at our growing private schools to see the value of boarding facilities. True, the private school needs the boarding facility because it draws its students from a wide geographic area, whereas the public school serves a local area. However, with boarding facilities there is a valuable educational utility which would allow the public school to break away from the traditional eight-to-five program.

Our urban schools will need more than boarding facilities alone to counteract the eight-to-five syndrome. They also require more imaginative and realistic programs to counteract the summer doldrums, which are simply an extension of the eight-to-five syndrome. Our urban schools, especially, should develop programs for the summer months which offer the student an opportunity to leave the city and experience the pleasure of learning in a recreational setting. These programs need not be as dependent on local and state revenues as are boarding facilities. It is conceivable that the schools could finance summer programs purely from voluntary contributions and school-wide efforts to raise funds from private sources.

The British experience proves that this is not a fantasy. In England at least one state-supported comprehensive school has boarding facilities and enthusiastic summer programs financed from voluntary contributions. It is the Crown Woods Comprehensive School, located in southeast London. Only eight years old, it has already established a reputation as being one of the most progressive and dynamic comprehensives in Britain. This is due to an excellent staff and energetic leadership given by Headmaster M. K. Ross, whose slogan is, "A school that is not experimental is dead!" The unique position of Crown Woods in British education resides in the fact that it is the only completely state-supported school to have both a boarding facility and a summer lodge. (It should perhaps be explained that a British comprehensive school, relatively new to the British educational structure, is the type of school that Americans would recognize as a public high school.)

Although the boarding facility at Crown Woods is not utilized exclusively for disadvantaged children, it does offer the London Educational Authority an opportunity to place some children for whom boarding education is regarded as desirable. The boarding house extension was completed at a cost of nearly $750,000. It opened in January, 1965, with a maximum of 120 students. The boarding facility has five resident staff members for administrative and supervisory duties who teach in the school during the regular school hours. In addition, there are six resident staff members to handle the health and food requirements of the children, as well as emergency building maintenance.

Crown Woods has gone a step further with boarding facilities by developing, purely from school-raised funds and donations fro charitable organizations, a summ lodge in the western highlands Scotland. The Interliever Lod Trust, as it is called, is providi the financial resources for purcha ing and developing a $60,000 lodg When eventually completed, it w provide dormitory accommodatio for 40 students and staff faciliti for eight. Additional features w include a library, art studio, fie study facilities, meeting roo boathouse, and even a log cab camp. Located on the banks Loch Awe, it will provide an ide setting for imaginative intellectu as well as physical recreation.

The Crown Woods experiment England offers an excellent mod for Americans to examine. Tru the student populations of urb areas like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles seem overwhelming large. At first, perhaps, only a rel tively few elementary and secon ary schools could be equipped wi boarding facilities and summ lodges. But pilot schools are n incompatible with the Americ sense of democracy. The potenti that boarding facilities and summ lodges offer for the development disadvantaged children may great enough to warrant the e periment and the expense.

Certainly such studies as t Coleman Report *(Equality of Ed cational Opportunity)* and B. Bloom's *Stability and Change Human Characteristics,* 1964, e phasize the importance of enviro ment in developing the academ and character traits of the chil When the child's home enviro ment is nonexistent, then the scho should provide a positive enviro ment for growth.

The challenge to develop the f potential of our human resourc should force us to look at every co ceivable program, domestic or fo eign, for the purpose of gainin ideas or insights on how best maximize our educational efforts

*The figures range from $2,700 per pupil $3,800 per pupil. The former is an avera tuition charge for secondary boardi schools; the latter the cost per pupil of experimental boarding school for eight graders, including a heavy research and service training budget.